

Embargoed until 00.01am on 28 January 2019

DFE TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

UCET supports the DFE teacher recruitment and retention strategy. The country is faced with a serious teacher supply crisis which we believe the strategy will help to address. We particularly welcome proposals relating to the Early Career Framework. While the quality of initial teacher education in this country is extremely high, it has to be recognised that new teachers can only learn so much in sufficient depth on what in many cases are 9-month programmes. To meet its full potential, we would like to see the ECF linked to Master's level qualifications and represent the first steps towards teaching become an all Master's qualified profession. That would help to both attract and retain ambitious new recruits and enhance the status of the profession. The benefits of teachers undertaking Master's level CPD are well documented¹, and it is a matter of regret that public subsidy was withdrawn in 2011 and that the system for administering postgraduate loans makes it difficult for new teachers to access funding to support Master's level CPD.

We would advise the DFE to resist the temptation to add to the detail of the ECF by commissioning any additional curriculum materials that become de-facto mandatory. Accredited ITE providers, who we believe should be charged with delivering the ECF, are well placed to develop and commission their own materials and allow programmes to be tailored to meet the needs of individual NQTs working in particular school contexts. We would not however have an objection to the development by the sector of supportive documentation that was not in any way prescriptive.

UCET also supports proposals relating to retention incentives, workload and an increase in undergraduate teacher education. We would also like to work with DFE on the development of specialist qualifications, which again could be linked to Master's level. Other measures we would suggest taking include replacing pre-ITE skills tests with on-programme assessments of literacy and numeracy, and focussing in marketing materials on the three core routes into the profession – postgraduate fee-paying, postgraduate salaried and undergraduate.

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¹ E.g. TDA PPD impact report, 2009